

GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS IN RHODE ISLAND

Chapter 11 of RI State Law on Abused and Neglected Children may be essentially paraphrased to indicate that every citizen is required to report suspected child abuse and neglect. "Any person who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that any child has been abused or neglected... or has been a victim of sexual abuse by another child...shall, within twenty-four (24) hours, transfer such information to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, or its agent who shall cause the report to be investigated immediately."

The phone number for reporting such cases is 1-800-RI-CHILD (1-800-742-4453)

As defined in Chapter 11, a child is a "person under the age of 18." An "abused and/or neglected child" means a child whose physical or mental health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm when his parent or other person responsible for his welfare:

- Inflicts, or allows to be inflicted upon the child physical or mental injury, including excessive corporal punishment; or
- Creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of physical or mental injury to the child, including excessive corporal punishment; or
- Commits or allows to be committed, against the child, an act of sexual abuse; or
- Fails to supply the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care, though financially able to do so or offered financial or other reasonable means to do so; or
- Fails to provide the child with a minimum degree of care or proper supervision or guardianship because of his unwillingness or inability to do so by situations or conditions such as, but not limited to, social or psychiatric problems or disorders, mental incompetence, or the use of a drug, drugs or alcohol to the extent that the parent or other persons responsible for the child's welfare loses the ability or is unwilling to properly care for the child: or
- Abandons or deserts the child.

